



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: April 14, 2021.

Time: 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: Dan Amstutz, Michael Barry, Wayne Chouinard, Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise (Chair), Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan, and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Corey Rateau.

Members of Public in Attendance: Linda Epstein, Sean Garballey, Guillermo Hamlin, Brian Ristuccia, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, and Joe Solomon.

A. Script for Remotely Conducted Meetings.

The Chair read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law," announced that the meeting was being recorded and reviewed the meeting ground rules.

B. Approval of March 10, 2021, Meeting Notes.

The Minutes of the March 10, 2021, meeting were approved on a roll-call vote.

C. Correspondence Sent/Received from 03/05/21 to 04/11/21.

There was no correspondence during this period.

D. June Meeting – Election of Officers.

The election of TAC officers occurs at the June Meeting of odd-number years. Howard Muise will not be running for re-election of Chair as he

will be moving out of Arlington. (He will Chair the June Meeting and will remain on TAC for a few months thereafter.)

Scott Smith will chair the Nomination Committee.

2. Public Comments.

Petru Sofio notified APD that diffusers on the southbound traffic signal at the intersection of Lake St and Brooks Ave were installed improperly; drivers' view of the light "disappears" when at the stop line. In response to Len Diggins, Petru Sofio noted that diffusers are placed for drivers to see only one signal at a time when one signal is close to a previous signal (as in this case).

Howard Muise informed Petru Sofio to contact DPW in the future. Wayne Chouinard reported that the diffusers were removed except for the green light.

3. Town Issues/Activities.

A. Dan Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

Bluebikes: docking stations were reinstalled last week: Railroad Lot at Minuteman Bikeway; Linwood St at Minuteman Bikeway; Broadway at Grafton St; and Mass Ave at Grafton St.

For this year, a new Bluebikes station was installed at Mass Ave at Broadway. The station at Magnolia Park (Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field) remained in place during the winter season.

Last Saturday, there were nearly 13,000 trips in the entire Bluebikes system. Since the beginning of April there have been more than 200 Bluebikes trips in Arlington.

SRTS: A meeting is scheduled for next week with Judy Crocker of the MA Safe Routes to School ("SRTS") Program to discuss Dallin Elementary School and the proposed Arrival/Dismissal plan. Dallin wants to implement changes for next school year.

Judy Crocker will present its assessment of Thompson School in a future meeting with TAC.

Economic Development Project: Arlington/Bedford/Lexington Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) is a planning process on access to town center areas from the Minuteman Bikeway. Arlington Heights is a focus, and this program is of particular interest to ABAC.

Connect Arlington: The strategic planning process will be concluding shortly. The advisory committee met last week to discuss the plan and the recommended meeting with Select Board members about the plan before committee endorsement. Acceptance of Connect Arlington is expected in May, which will be followed by its implementation.

Minuteman Bikeway: a planning project for the Minuteman Bikeway is funded this fiscal year with CPA funds and will closely involve ABAC.

B. Wayne Chouinard provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW):

Road planning: Planning for the construction season is concluding; the projects will be out to bid in the next two weeks.

Lake Street/Minuteman Bikeway intersection: Addressing the final points on the punch list. Pedestrian and Bike detection is now working. Traffic signal diffusers were removed, except for green light. The dynamic feedback sign was fixed. In response to a question from Petru Sofio, Wayne Chouinard responded that a "Wait for Green" sign will be added.

DPW asks TAC, ABAC, and others to report cracks on the Bikeway from roots in order to address problem locations before more damage is done to the Bikeway surface.

C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).

4. Chestnut Street Traffic Calming

Howard Muise informed the TAC that a public listening meeting was held on March 30, 2021, to discuss Chestnut St Traffic Calming. The Working Group presented possible short-, mid-, and long-term actions to a public that is eager to move forward.

Simultaneously, a survey by DPCD is being conducted, which will be closed tomorrow. At present, 155 survey responses have been received. The survey results mirror the comments from the listening session.

The Working Group will complete a draft memo of recommendations and circulate it to TAC for review. The goal is for TAC to vote to pass a memo with recommendations to the Select Board next month.

Howard Muise and Dan Amstutz discussed the possible short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions presented at the listening meeting and comments from the public.

Short-Term Actions:

1. Russell Parking Lot sidewalk repair and detection panels.
2. Curb extension/bump out on northside at Chestnut Terr.
3. Pedestrian refuge island.
4. Crosswalk warning signs.
5. No crosswalk (i.e., remove crosswalk and direct pedestrians to extant crosswalks at Mystic St or Medford St).

Pedestrians crossing Chestnut St at Chestnut Terr is a desired route to Arlington Center. On Chestnut St, the distance from Mystic St to Chestnut Terr is more than 200' and meets the minimum acceptable distance for a mid-block crosswalk from a signalized crosswalk. Notably, the pedestrian crossing at Mystic St is challenging because pedestrians must navigate three separate crossings due to the pedestrian islands and traffic-signal phasing.

Several members of the public observed that the right turn from westbound Chestnut St to northbound Mystic St is dangerous to pedestrians. The slip lane permits drivers to travel at high speed while not having to look for pedestrians. In contrast, there is a No Right Turn on Red from northbound Mystic St onto eastbound Chestnut St. Scott Smith suggested making the right turn from Chestnut St onto Mystic St a No Turn on Red. Paul Schlichtman requested traffic enforcement on automobiles traveling through the right-turn slip lanes.

The TAC working group recommends retaining the crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. Survey results and comments generally approve retaining the crosswalk and making the crossing at Chestnut Terr safe.

Mid-Term Actions:

1. 8-foot-curb extension on northside of Chestnut St. at Chestnut Terr.
2. Narrow travel lanes to 11 feet
3. 8-foot parking lane on the northside of Chestnut (4-hr parking)
4. 5-foot bike lanes on each side of Chestnut St
5. 3-foot buffer between parking and bike lane on northside

The roadway width of Chestnut St at Chestnut Terr is 50 feet. This presents an opportunity to reconfigure the pavement to accommodate safer crossing, bike lanes, and parking, while slowing vehicular traffic.

Preliminary survey results were favorable to adding curb extensions and bike lanes. Scott Smith noted that the parking lane needs to be marked to accommodate the curb extension. Otherwise, it would cause problems for cyclists. Petru Sofio supports the use of flexposts for parking-protected bike lanes on Chestnut St.

Dan Amstutz and Paul Schlichtman commented on the Arlington Center Parking Study (2014), which recommended free, 4-hour, on-street parking on both sides of the Chestnut St. between Chestnut Terr and Medford St. Presently, there is no signage on the south side, and some conflicting signage on the north side. Paul Schlichtman urged that updating the parking signs is a short-term action. Parked vehicles will slow traffic.

Long-Term Actions:

1. Permanent 5-foot pedestrian refuge or raised crosswalk.
2. Pedestrian-activated signal/automatic flashing signal/rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)
3. Reconstruct Mystic St and Chestnut St, and Chestnut St and Medford St intersections as standard T-intersections.

The working group considered advancing pedestrian-activated signal/automatic flashing signal/RRFB from a long-term action to a mid-term action, as there is strong public support (~60%). Public comments at the listening session showed a preference for pedestrian actuation. Hybrid beacon (HAWK) was not included in the proposed actions due to the Town's poor experience with HAWK at Mass Ave and Swan Pl. Jeff Maxtutis commented that adding RRFB should be a definite action with its installation timed with repaving Chestnut St.

Wayne Chouinard commented that DPW is working on Chestnut St planning including repaving, curb ramps, and upgrades to ADA compliance. There is reduced road funding this year, and construction will be pushed to next year. Broadly speaking, the plan would be to repave Chestnut St from Medford St to Mystic St., and Mystic St from Chestnut St. to Summer St. Responding to a question from Laura Swan, he noted that the "don't block the box" pavement markings can be included after repaving.

The public did not express a strong interest to install a pedestrian refuge island at Chestnut Terr. Scott Smith was hesitant to disregard a pedestrian refuge island, as it has proven safety benefits. Laura Swan asked whether the pedestrian island would interfere with the St. Agnes driveway. Paul Schlichtman responded that a pilot project could help to address the proper location, adding that the St. Agnes driveway is infrequently used and there is another exit onto Medford St. Jeff Maxtutis

agreed that a temporary pedestrian refuge island could be considered as a short-term action to assess its location and effectiveness. Most effective will be combining multiple elements, such as curb extensions and the refuge island.

Installing a raised crosswalk could prove challenging as there are none in the Town at present. This would require discussion with emergency services and DPW to develop a clear understanding of how to implement it.

Reconstruction of the intersections at Mystic St and/or Medford St is strongly supported by the public but would require time and money for design and construction. Paul Schlichtman informed TAC that Representative Sean Garballey is seeking to get a budget for the long-term in place for such projects. Strong expression of Town support and prioritization for intersection reconstruction is vital to get into this budget cycle.

5. Lower Washington Street Issues

Melissa Laube provided an overview of the issues: lower Washington St is a narrow, pot-holed roadway with a tight bend, and is a statutory private way. The working group discussed three options: (1) make the roadway one-way; (2) close the roadway to motor-vehicle traffic; (3) retain two-way direction and add signage.

The Town would need to approve a change in traffic flow. The working group will be contacting APD and AFD to see if their departments are amenable to a change in traffic flow. If so, the working group will perform additional analyses.

In response to a question from Dan Amstutz, Melissa Laube answered that she has been in email correspondence with the person who sent the request to the Select Board.

6. Update: Mass Ave at Appleton St.

The first meeting of the Design Review Committee was held on March 23; the second meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. The Design Review Committee discussed concepts from Green International, Phil Goff (EALS), Petru Sofio, and Neighborways Design.

The committee is reviewing several options including narrowing the intersection, adding curb extensions, removing the signal, and adding an RRFB. It also is considering one-way operation for Appleton PI (away from Mass Ave), which is supported by St. Athanasius the Great Greek Orthodox Church.

Jeff Maxtutis noted two issues that require further discussion: (1) removing the exclusive pedestrian signal, and (2) inclusion of a dedicated westbound left-turn lane. Green International also recommended turn restrictions for Mass Ave to/from Appleton St.

Shoji Takahashi asked about short-term actions and funding for making changes. Dan Amstutz commented that short-term actions could include painted curb extensions and pavement markings. Other materials such as flexposts can be put into place quickly. There was a limited discussion about funding.

7. Update: Proposed MUTCD Revisions

Scott Smith provided a brief summary on the proposed revisions to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), noting that MUTCD is a national standard. The comment period to the proposed revisions closes on May 14. Comments have been submitted by EALS, Petru Sofio, Phil Goff, and perhaps others in the community. Comments are encouraged by pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups as the proposed MUTCD is viewed as “auto centric”.

8. Update: Thorndike Place

Howard Muise updated the TAC on the ZBA draft for approval of Thorndike Place with the following transportation-relevant conditions:

1. TDM program in consultation with DPCD.
2. Bike repair station and pumps in bike storage area.
3. Long-term secure bike parking; short-term outdoor bike parking.
4. Transit-screen installation to provide real-time information of transit options within one mile of the site.
5. Ratio of 1.12 parking spaces per unit (176 units; 197 parking spaces).
6. Parking subject to additional fee to discourage automobile ownership.
7. One-month Charlie Card to each adult in unit, up to two per unit.
8. EV charging stations at 5 percent of parking spaces (10 spaces).
9. Annual update on planning
10. Installation of at least two Bluebikes stations (pay for the dock and installation).

11. ADA-compliant sidewalk and path to access Alewife T Station.
12. Information on turn restrictions into the neighborhood.

9. Update: Park Ave at Appleton St Warrant Article

Joe Solomon of Appleton Street updated the TAC on funding for a study on how a proposed signal at Park Ave and Appleton Street would affect traffic on Park Ave. Al Tosti of the Finance Committee informed him that the funding will not be through Town Meeting. DPW will work with TAC to fund this study.

10. Update: Speed Enforcement in Crosby St Neighborhood

Shoji Takahashi informed TAC that a formal request was made for traffic data to be collected on Crosby St. The request usually goes to Corey Rateau, who is out on medical leave. APD has informed TAC that traffic-data collection will occur when Corey Rateau returns. Data collection may have to wait until the next school year (autumn) to in order to obtain relevant data.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.